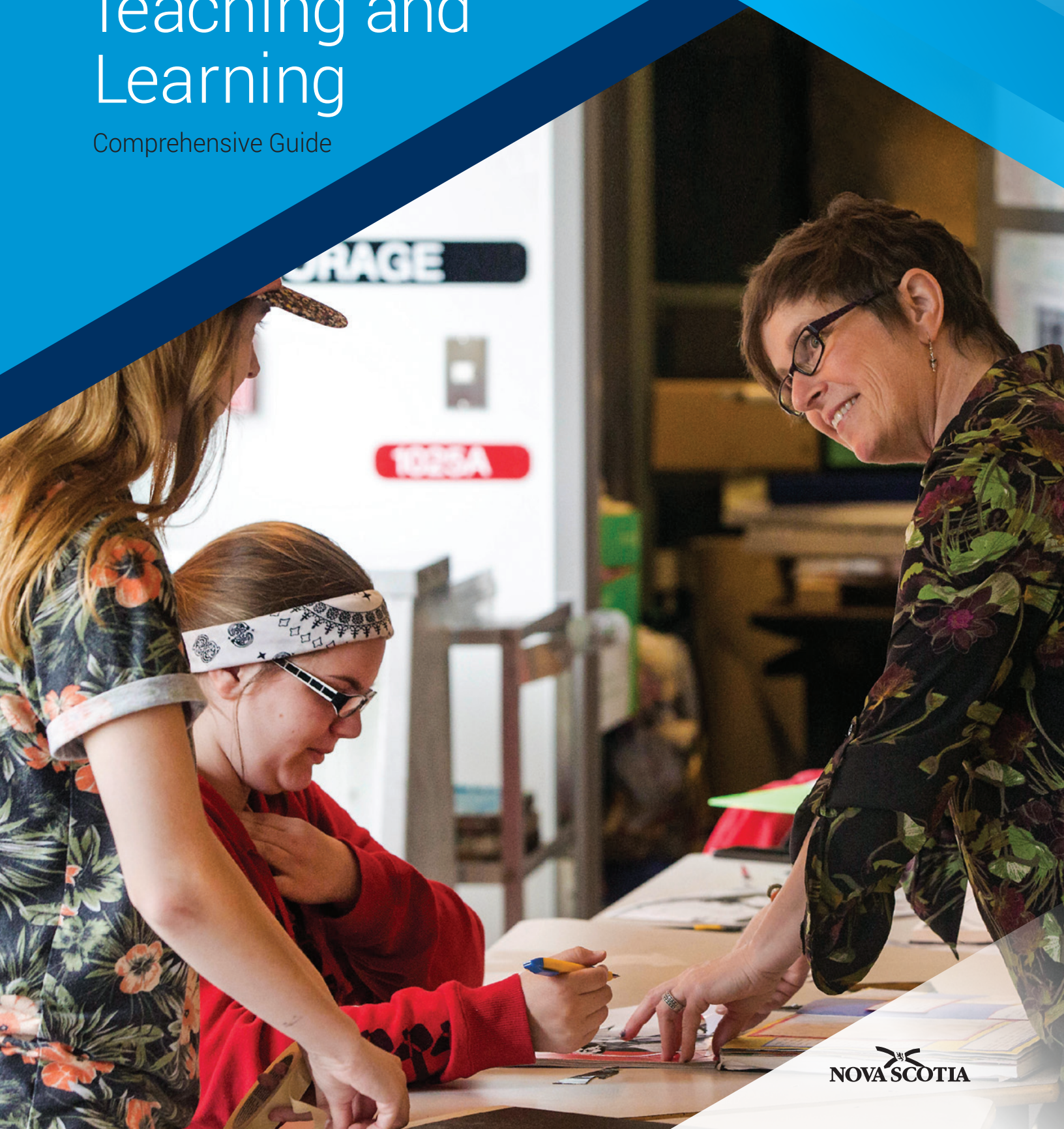


Nova Scotia Teaching Standards

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Comprehensive Guide



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Nova Scotia Teaching Standards Excellence in Teaching and Learning
Comprehensive Guide
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
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Teaching Standards for Nova Scotia – Comprehensive Guide

- 1** Teachers know, respond to, and engage their students.
- 2** Teachers know their subjects and how to teach them.
- 3** Teachers use 'Assessment *for* and *of* Learning' to guide teaching and learning.
- 4** Teachers create safe and positive learning environments.
- 5** Teachers participate in professional learning throughout their careers.
- 6** Teachers model and promote professionalism in teaching.

1 Teachers know, respond to, and engage their students.

Teachers are student-centered and hold high expectations for student success. Teachers get to know their students and have a broad understanding of how students develop and learn. They use information about student development and diverse cultures, learning strengths and needs, languages and life experiences to guide all aspects of teaching. They provide culturally-responsive, engaging learning experiences that enable students to achieve the learning outcomes. Teachers consider the core values of diversity, equity and inclusivity in their decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, student engagement, and classroom management.

2 Teachers know their subjects and how to teach them.

Teachers use their knowledge and skill in content and pedagogy to provide high-quality teaching. They use broad knowledge and information from different sources to make the curriculum accessible and engaging for students. They also rely on classroom experience, educational research, and professional learning to continuously inform and update their practice. Teachers provide instruction in the higher-order thinking skills that are essential for students in contemporary society. They respond to diverse student learning needs through culturally-responsive teaching and individualized program planning. Teachers are knowledgeable about and utilize provincial curricula, initiatives, policies, learning resources, technologies, and assessment strategies. They teach literacy across subjects and grade levels as an embedded component of their teaching. Teachers have access to research and utilize the teaching approaches that have been shown to have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement.

3 Teachers use ‘Assessment for and of Learning’ to guide teaching and learning.

Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in the use of assessment *for* and *of* learning and the use of assessment data to foster student success. They align assessment activities with learning outcomes to guide teaching and learning, monitor student progress, and engage students in self-assessment. Teachers tailor assessment to meet the needs of students through culturally-responsive assessment practices and program planning. Teachers involve students in the assessment process to foster independence and ownership for their learning. Teachers communicate the criteria for success to students and provide them with prompt, descriptive feedback.

4 Teachers create safe and positive learning environments.

Teachers create and maintain positive learning environments that are equitable, inclusive, and safe. Teachers follow the *Provincial School Code of Conduct* and other policies associated with student behaviour. They establish respectful relationships with students, parents and guardians, colleagues, and other partners in education. They provide culturally-responsive and student-centered responses to differences in student behaviour associated with culture, language, and life experience. Teachers address unacceptable student behaviour in an equitable, consistent and fair manner. They work with parents and guardians, guidance counsellors, mental health professionals, and others to address student behavioural challenges, mental health concerns, and special needs.

5 Teachers participate in professional learning throughout their careers.

Teachers engage in professional learning activities that support their professional growth in the attributes, knowledge and skills essential to teaching. Their professional learning is focused on high-quality teaching that is responsive to the needs of their students. They identify and address their professional learning needs through self-reflection and collaboration. Throughout their careers, teachers participate in and/or contribute to formal and informal professional learning activities. They use professional learning to stay current in educational research, technology, policy, inclusion and many other aspects of their professional practice. Teachers apply professional learning to create changes in classroom practice that support student achievement and success.

6 Teachers model and promote professionalism in teaching.

Teachers model professionalism characterized by integrity, honesty, trust, and respect. They demonstrate commitment to the best interest and well-being of students. They promote public confidence in the teaching profession through high-quality teaching that supports student success. Teachers are knowledgeable about and fulfill their professional, ethical, legal, and contractual responsibilities, including the confidentiality requirements associated with their work. Teachers foster positive and respectful relationships with students, parents and guardians, families, colleagues, communities and other partners in education. They demonstrate professional conduct in a variety of settings, including schools, communities, digital sites, and social media. Teachers demonstrate a commitment to the school community through participation in school activities. They serve as role models for the students that they teach and as ambassadors for their profession.

Teaching Standards for Nova Scotia — Comprehensive Guide

What are the Teaching Standards?

The teaching standards are a supportive and integrated framework of six components of high quality teaching in Nova Scotia. All six standards share a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusivity, and high expectations for student learning and achievement.

What is the vision of the Teaching Standards?

The vision of the teaching standards is to support excellence in teaching and learning through consistent, high-quality teaching in every classroom.

What is the purpose of the Teaching Standards?

The purpose of the teaching standards is to provide support and structure for teachers while serving as the foundation for major changes to our education system. The standards also promote the teaching profession, heightening public awareness of the vital role that teachers play in the development, learning, and achievement of our children and youth.

Why were the Teaching Standards created?

The teaching standards evolved from the comprehensive review of the Nova Scotia public education system and the associated *Action Plan for Education*. When the comprehensive review was completed, one of the key strategies that was identified for advancing high-quality teaching was the provision of support for effective teaching and learning. The teaching standards were created in response to this recommendation. Within schools, teaching has the strongest impact on student achievement. The standards are a supportive framework that provide a clear definition of high quality teaching that assists teachers in identifying their professional learning needs. The standards also provide a detailed description of the breadth and scope of teaching that serves as the foundation for teacher education and professional learning programs. Based on a collaborative and consultative development process that engaged multiple education partners across the province, the Nova Scotia teaching standards are tailored to our province and our teachers.

What are Indicators?

Indicators are detailed descriptions of the attributes, knowledge and skills associated with each teaching standard. While knowledge and skills are often more readily visible, attributes are also essential components of high quality teaching. For clarity, the indicators for attributes are highlighted in blue to separate them from the more observable and measurable indicators for knowledge and skills.

- **Attributes** represent the attitudes, values and beliefs that play a critical role in teachers' practice. Attributes are foundational to teachers' professional practice and have been shown in the research to exert a significant influence on teaching and learning.

- **Knowledge** defines what teachers must know to teach effectively. Teachers' knowledge is broad and deep and encompasses a wide range of topics, including, but not limited to: child development, subject content, pedagogy, program planning, cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, positive behaviour management strategies, education policy, and professional ethics.
- **Skills** describe the application of teachers' attributes and knowledge in the classroom. Skills are the observable and measureable behaviours that represent what teachers believe, value, and know about teaching and learning.

The indicators are not a checklist of benchmarks to be simultaneously achieved by all teachers at the same level, in the same way, and at the same time. Rather, they are supportive and consistent descriptions of the teaching standards that serve as signposts for professional growth. Taken together, the indicators provide a powerful description of the depth and scope of teaching in today's classrooms. They articulate the attributes, knowledge and skills that teachers bring to their complex and challenging assignments. The indicators provide teachers with a comprehensive framework that assists them in identifying where they are and where they need to go in meeting the learning needs of children and youth within the context of their classrooms and schools.

The indicators also serve as a foundation for teacher education and professional learning in Nova Scotia. They underpin teacher education at the Bachelor and Graduate levels, and the creation of an accreditation process for the university schools of education. The standards also frame the development and delivery of professional learning programs that are tailored to teachers' identified professional learning needs in their respective schools and Regional Centres of Education (RCEs)/school board. These professional learning needs will continue to evolve as teachers move into new teaching assignments and strive to keep pace with ongoing changes in public education.

How were the Teaching Standards developed?

Nova Scotia's Teaching Standards are based on extensive consultation, a review of current research and professional literature, analysis of education reports, and comparison of different models of teaching standards in other jurisdictions. Overall, the findings pointed to the importance of teaching quality in student achievement and success. The collaborative development process was designed to produce teaching standards that are informed by a wide information base, responsive to the partners in public education, and framed within the Nova Scotia context.

1

Standard One: Teachers know, respond to, and engage their students.

Teachers are student-centered and hold high expectations for student success. Teachers get to know their students and have a broad understanding of how students develop and learn. They use information about student development and diverse cultures, learning strengths and needs, languages and life experiences to guide all aspects of teaching. They provide culturally-responsive, engaging learning experiences that enable students to achieve the learning outcomes. Teachers consider the core values of diversity, equity and inclusivity in their decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, student engagement, and classroom management.

Attributes

The teacher:

- believes in success for all students and recognizes the positive impact of high expectations for all students
- recognizes the impact of teaching on student learning, including the influence of teachers' values, beliefs and biases
- values the experiences that students bring to school, including the contributions of their families and communities
- is committed to raising the achievement of all students and narrowing the achievement gap for students of African descent and Aboriginal heritage

Knowledge

The teacher:

- is familiar with the developmental characteristics of the age group that they teach (cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, behaviour) and the factors that impact student development
- understands the important roles of culture, language, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, diversity, equity, and inclusion in student learning
- is knowledgeable about the special needs of students (giftedness, cognitive, emotional/behavioural, learning, physical, medical, communication, sensory, multiple disabilities, mental health) and the program planning process

Skills

The teacher:

- utilizes an understanding of child and youth development and individual differences in student learning to guide all aspects of teaching
- creates learning experiences that engage all students, including the support of student identity development in a minority language context
- creates attainable learning goals based on high expectations for student success
- seeks and responds to information about student diversity, including, but not limited to: culture, language, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and religion
- seeks and responds to information about various types of individual student learning strengths and challenges, including but not limited to: giftedness, mental health, multiple disabilities, cognitive, emotional/behavioural, learning, physical, medical, communication, sensory
- provides culturally responsive teaching that reflects the diverse cultures, languages, life experiences, and backgrounds of students, including programming that reflects living in an official minority language context
- provides programming tailored to individual students with special needs
- adapts curriculum, assessment, and learning resources so that all students see themselves reflected in their school

2 **Standard Two:** Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach them.

Teachers use their knowledge and skill in content and pedagogy to provide high-quality teaching. They use broad knowledge and information from different sources, including parents, families, and communities, to make the curriculum accessible and engaging for students. They also rely on classroom experience, educational research, and professional learning to continuously inform and update their practice. Teachers provide instruction in the higher-order thinking skills that are essential for students in contemporary society. They respond to diverse student learning needs through culturally-responsive teaching and individualized program planning. Teachers are knowledgeable about and utilize provincial curricula, initiatives, policies, learning resources, technologies, and assessment strategies. They teach literacy across subjects and grade levels as an embedded component of their teaching. Teachers have access to research and utilize the teaching approaches that have been shown to have the greatest impact on student learning.

Attributes

The teacher:

- is committed to providing access to an equitable education that is differentiated to meet students' learning needs
- recognizes the importance of staying current on subject-area content and pedagogy as they evolve
- values multiple perspectives within the discipline and students' critical evaluations of these perspectives
- values the importance of culturally-responsive teaching
- is committed to excellence in the provision of high-quality teaching to all students

Knowledge

The teacher:

- has a deep knowledge of the Nova Scotia curriculum, including instructional resources, instructional strategies, assessment practices, integration of technology, Essential Graduation Competencies, and the progression of learning outcomes
- has a deep knowledge of the content area that they teach, including academic vocabulary, major concepts, processes of inquiry, misconceptions, and controversies
- knows how to provide culturally-responsive teaching that includes integrating ethnic and cultural content, assessment practices, and instructional resources

- knows the program planning process and when and how to individualize learning outcomes when the curriculum outcomes are not applicable or attainable
- knows how to use educational technologies as an integral part of teaching
- meets the additional standards required for teaching in specialty areas
- demonstrates a high level of mastery of the oral and written language of instruction

Skills

The teacher:

- uses a broad range of strategies, learning experiences, resources, technologies and representations to deliver the Nova Scotia curriculum outcomes to all students, including approaches that highlight the value of French first language
- incorporates the key priorities and initiatives of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in their teaching, including literacy, numeracy and career-readiness
- teaches literacy across grades and subjects, as an integral component of instruction
- teaches cross-curricular concepts and higher-order skills, including critical thinking, innovation, problem-solving, and creativity
- ensures that learning experiences reflect accurate and current content and address misconceptions
- addresses bias in instructional resources, personal attitudes and beliefs, and societal structures
- encourages students to reflect on their prior knowledge, pose questions, and analyze ideas
- develops, implements, and monitors Adaptations and Individual Program Plans tailored to individual students
- completes all stages of the program planning process, as required, including participation on program planning teams
- evaluates, adapts and modifies instructional resources, technologies, and assessment materials to meet the learning needs of all students, including students with special needs
- utilizes current educational research and evidence to identify and implement teaching strategies that have been shown to have the greatest impact on student learning
- quickly adjusts instruction to meet students' changing learning needs

3

Standard Three:

Teachers use 'Assessment *for* and *of* Learning' to guide teaching and learning.

Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in the use of assessment for and of learning and the use of assessment data to foster student success. They align assessment activities with learning outcomes to guide teaching and learning, monitor student progress, and engage students in self-assessment. Teachers tailor assessment to meet the needs of students through culturally-responsive assessment practices and program planning. Teachers involve students in the assessment process to foster independence and ownership for their learning. Teachers communicate the criteria for success to students and provide them with prompt, descriptive feedback.

Attributes

The teacher:

- is committed to fair, equitable, ethical, and culturally-responsive assessment practices, including the use of assessment data
- respects the different ways that students learn and the varied forms of assessment required so that students can demonstrate what they know
- recognizes the importance of accuracy, validity, and reliability in student assessment
- collaborates with specialists in selecting or designing appropriate assessments

Knowledge

The teacher:

- understands how to evaluate and utilize assessment data from multiple sources (classroom, school, RCE/board, other) to identify gaps in student learning and inform teaching
- knows when and how to use assessment of and for learning
- knows how to identify and respond to bias in student assessment to ensure equitable assessment
- understands the range and purposes of different types of student assessment, and the factors that influence the choice, administration and evaluation of student assessments
- knows how to adapt assessment, especially for students with special needs
- knows how to prepare students for different types of assessments using study strategies, test-taking skills and varied assessment formats

Skills

The teacher:

- embeds student assessment and evaluation in all levels of instruction – including planning and teaching
- aligns student assessment with learning outcomes, including outcomes related to a French first language minority context that encourages student reflection on cultural identity
- collaborates with students to co-create goals for student progress in relation to these outcomes
- designs, adapts, and selects appropriate assessment activities that accommodate individual learning differences and support culturally-responsive teaching
- uses a combination of formative and summative assessment
- evaluates information from a variety of sources to support equitable and responsive student assessment
- communicates to students the learning outcomes and criteria for success
- engages students actively in the assessment process, in order to develop their capacity to co-construct criteria for success, self-monitor progress, and communicate students' learning
- provides descriptive feedback to students that is prompt and specific
- creates and maintains records that document and communicate progress in student learning
- regularly communicates student progress to parents and guardians

4 **Standard Four:** Teachers create safe and positive learning environments.

Teachers create and maintain positive learning environments that are equitable, inclusive, and safe. Teachers follow the Provincial School Code of Conduct and other policies associated with student behaviour. They establish respectful relationships with students, parents and guardians, colleagues, and other partners in education. They provide culturally-responsive and student-centered responses to differences in student behaviour associated with culture, language, and life experience. Teachers address unacceptable student behaviour in an equitable, consistent, and fair manner. They work with parents and guardians, guidance counsellors, mental health professionals, and others to address student behavioural challenges, mental health concerns, and special needs.

Attributes

The teacher:

- recognizes the important role of positive relationships in establishing and maintaining safe and secure learning environments, in which students feel valued and value each other
- recognizes the impact of students' diverse personal and family backgrounds, lived experiences, skills, abilities, perspectives, talents, and interests on their behaviour
- values the role of teachers in modeling, teaching, and reinforcing positive student behaviour
- is committed to the social emotional development and well-being of students

Knowledge

The teacher:

- is familiar with the varied factors that impact student behaviour, including culture, lived experience, socioeconomic status, learning styles, stage of development, and physical, social emotional and mental health
- has broad knowledge of effective classroom management techniques, progressive behaviour management strategies, and successful restorative approaches
- knows the Provincial School Code of Conduct and other pertinent legislation, policies and procedures related to student behaviour

Skills

The teacher:

- creates and maintains safe and secure learning environments that reflect, value, respond to, and promote pride in student diversity, including cultural and linguistic differences
- develops positive and supportive relationships with students, characterized by mutual respect
- models and promotes positive social behaviour by teaching students how to engage in respectful interactions with one another, how to behave in specific school settings, and how to responsibly use communication and information technology
- provides students with opportunities to develop self-advocacy skills and take responsibility for their behaviour
- provides appropriate programming to facilitate positive and active engagement for all students
- manages classroom routines that effectively promote positive student behaviour during varied activities, including instructional groups, transitions between learning activities, and utilization of learning resources
- adheres to school-wide behavioural expectations for students
- involves students in the creation, implementation, and self-monitoring of classroom behavioural expectations
- employs proactive, preventative and restorative approaches to positive student behaviour at all ages and stages of development
- draws from a range of behaviour management strategies that are equitable, fair, progressive, student-centered and respectful of the dignity of the student
- implements consequences consistently when students do not meet behavioural expectations
- partners with parents and guardians, colleagues, and other professionals to support students with challenging behaviours
- immediately reports unacceptable student behaviour that endangers the well-being of themselves, their classmates, and/or school staff, including any discriminatory or racist behaviours
- refers students with chronic behavioural challenges and/or mental health concerns to support services as part of the program planning process
- develops, implements, and monitors behavioural Adaptations and Individual Program Plans tailored to individual student behavioural challenges and serves on program planning teams
- implements all pertinent policies and procedures related to student behaviour, including requirements for recording, documenting, and/or reporting instances of unacceptable student behaviour

5

Standard Five:

Teachers participate in professional learning throughout their careers.

Teachers engage in professional learning activities that support their professional growth in the attributes, knowledge, and skills essential to teaching. Their professional learning is focused on high-quality teaching that is responsive to the needs of their students. They identify and address their professional learning needs through self-reflection and collaboration. Throughout their careers, teachers participate in and/or contribute to formal and informal professional learning activities. They use professional learning to stay current in educational research, technology, policy, inclusion and many other aspects of their professional practice. Teachers apply professional learning to create changes in classroom practice that support student achievement and success.

Attributes

The teacher:

- values educational research and professional learning and their impact on teaching practice
- is committed to lifelong learning and continually engages in self-reflection, professional inquiry, and professional learning from a variety of sources
- recognizes the importance of their contributions to the professional learning of their colleagues
- values collaborative learning with colleagues with a focus on improving learning for all students

Knowledge

The teacher:

- stays current in educational theory and innovations in instruction, assessment, program planning, and classroom management and their application in the classroom
- knows how to access professional learning opportunities that support professional growth and inform classroom practice
- understands how to use data from a variety of sources to assist with planning for professional learning

Skills

The teacher:

- actively participates in professional learning that assists them with their professional responsibilities, including subject-area content, pedagogy, assessment, technology, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and the program planning process
- aligns professional learning with RCE/board and department priorities, including but not limited to: literacy, numeracy and career-readiness
- incorporates professional learning per their professional growth plans
- accesses a broad range of professional learning opportunities from multiple sources including coaches, mentors, and colleagues
- participates in and contributes to school, RCE/board, and provincially-sponsored professional learning activities
- participates in professional learning as a lifelong learner who continually engages in self-reflection regarding teaching practice
- participates in professional learning focused on the values of equity, fairness, diversity, and inclusion, including strategies for minority language instruction, cultural identity and French language proficiency
- engages in collaborative professional learning, including professional conversations
- completes research-based and evidence-based professional learning to stay current in the profession
- reviews, analyzes, and utilizes classroom, school, RCE/board, and provincial data to identify learning and behavioural needs and inform instruction
- engages in professional learning activities related to programs and services for students with special needs
- demonstrates respect for colleagues and facilitators when engaging in professional learning activities through attendance, punctuality, and participation

6

Standard Six:

Teachers model and promote professionalism in teaching.

Teachers model professionalism characterized by integrity, honesty, trust, and respect. They demonstrate commitment to the best interest and well-being of students. They promote public confidence in the teaching profession through high-quality teaching that supports student success. Teachers are knowledgeable and fulfill their professional, ethical, legal, and contractual responsibilities, including the confidentiality requirements associated with their work. Teachers foster positive and respectful relationships with students, parents and guardians, families, colleagues, communities, and other partners in education. They demonstrate professional conduct in a variety of settings, including schools, communities, digital sites, and social media. Teachers demonstrate a commitment to the school community through participation in school activities. They serve as role models for the students that they teach and as ambassadors for their profession.

Attributes

The teacher:

- promotes excellence in teaching and provides high-quality teaching for all students
- is committed to the best interest, well-being, and success of all students
- values their school community, and recognizes the importance of community engagement, collegial relationships and partnerships in education
- recognizes the influence of teachers in student success
- is committed to promoting public confidence in the teaching profession through honesty, integrity, and accountability
- values and promotes democratic principles in education, including freedom, diversity, citizenship, social justice, and respect for the environment

Knowledge

The teacher:

- is knowledgeable about the ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities of teachers, as defined by school, RCE/board, provincial, and Ministerial policies and collective agreements
- understands the roles and responsibilities associated with working with partner agencies
- is knowledgeable about the priorities and expectations of teachers from their school, RCE/board, and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- understands the Student Success Planning process and their role in school improvement planning
- understands the importance of professional conduct in the personal use of social media

Skills

The teacher:

- models high standards of teaching characterized by collegiality, honesty, integrity, fairness, and accountability
- attends to and advocates for the welfare and dignity of students
- engages in collaborative and respectful professional relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and other partners in education
- models professionalism, through appropriate dress, punctuality, communication, and conduct in school, community, and on-line environments
- contributes to collaborative, inclusive, and welcoming schools through participation in school activities and partnerships with communities, including engagement with Acadian and French language and culture
- complies with school, RCE/board, and provincial regulations and adheres to directions given by those in authority
- complies with confidentiality requirements associated with their work, including the recording, storing, access, release, and handling of confidential information
- participates in the performance appraisal process
- fulfils all legal, ethical, contractual, and professional duties associated with their assignments
- demonstrates an ongoing professional commitment to education
- completes all professional duties as required by the RCE/board and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- contributes to the development and implementation of school Student Success Plans
- fulfils the 'Duty to Report' suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect as required by legislation

